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Economic Impact Studies: The First Year in Review

Illinois Inst for Environmental Quality, Chicago

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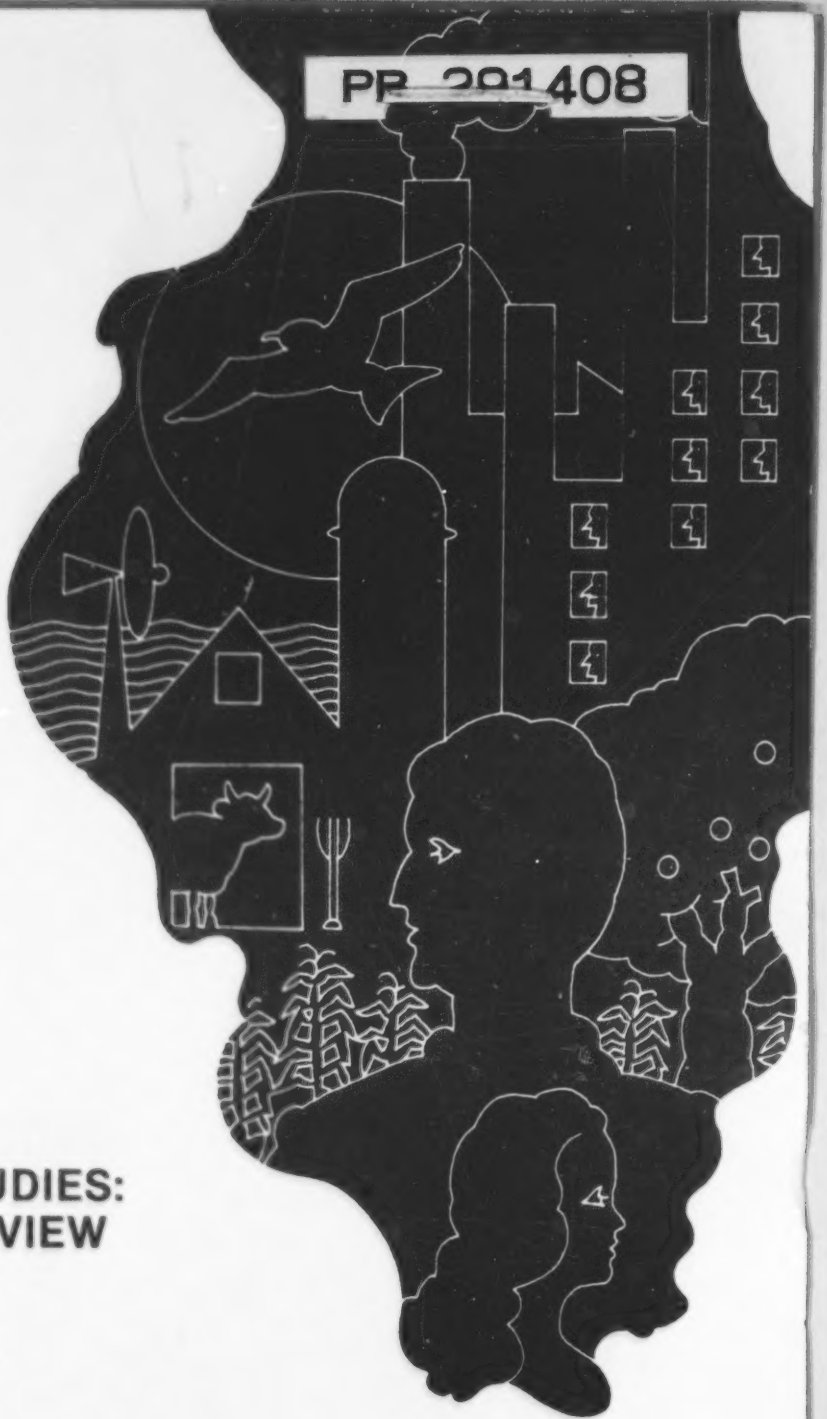

ILLINOIS
INSTITUTE FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY

ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDIES: THE FIRST YEAR IN REVIEW

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In October 1975, Illinois became the first state to pass legislation requiring that the economic impacts of proposed environmental regulations be considered. The basic purpose of these evaluations was to provide information regarding the costs and benefits of the proposals to the Pollution Control Board. Since the passage of Public Act 79-790, the Institute for Environmental Quality has completed thirteen economic impact studies of proposed regulations (see table 1) and expended an estimated 10 man-years of Institute and consulting personnel time to accomplish this task. Some of the major benefits and costs associated with these proposals are shown in tables 3 and 4.

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ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDIES:

THE FIRST YEAR IN REVIEW

Project No. 60.028

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June, 1977

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Frank Beal
DIRECTOR

June 16, 1977

To the Honorable James R. Thompson
and Members of the General Assembly:

For slightly over a year now, the Illinois Institute for Environmental Quality has been conducting routine investigations into the economic impact of environmental regulations. In accordance with section 6(d) of the Environmental Protection Act, I hereby submit to you the attached document, which constitutes our first annual report on this important activity.

Respectfully,

Frank Beal,
Director

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SUMMARY OF THE IIEQ ADMINISTRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

In October 1975, Illinois became the first state to pass legislation requiring that the economic impacts of proposed environmental regulations be considered. The basic purpose of these evaluations was to provide information regarding the costs and benefits of the proposals to the Pollution Control Board. Since the passage of Public Act 79-790, the Institute for Environmental Quality has completed thirteen economic impact studies of proposed regulations (see table 1) and expended an estimated 10 man-years of Institute and consulting personnel time to accomplish this task. Some of the major benefits and costs associated with these proposals are shown in tables 3 and 4.

This program of economic assessment has altered the nature of the interaction between the Pollution Control Board, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Institute for Environmental Quality with regard to the regulatory hearing process. The stages of this process are shown in Figure 1. Formerly, the Board or the EPA might call upon the Institute to carry out a technical study in support of a specific regulatory proposal. The subjects of these studies have generally been environmental quality assessments, evaluations of the state-of-the-art of control technology or environmental health-related topics. The findings of the study are presented in the technical hearing before the Board.

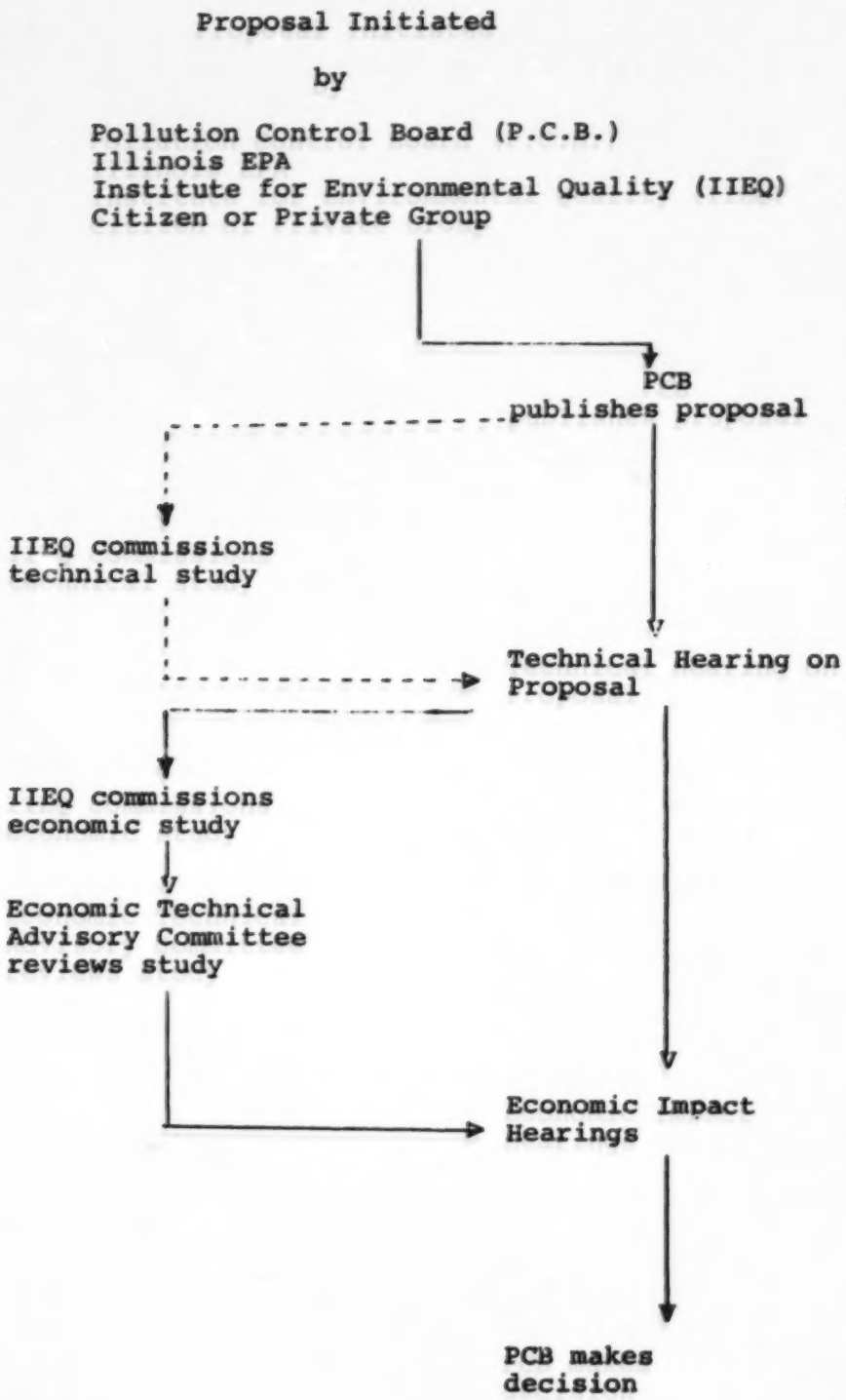
Due to PA 79-790, the Institute must also commission an economic study of the regulation. These analyses are normally initiated toward the end of the technical hearings so that the testimony from the hearings may become input to the economic study. Upon completion of the study, it is submitted to an Economic Technical Advisory Committee. This Committee, whose existence and composition are specified in PA 79-790, writes an opinion to the Institute Director indicating whether the study should be forwarded to the Board. After the study is submitted, hearings are held on the economic impacts of the proposal. The Pollution Control Board then makes a decision on the proposal.

Although significant progress has been made in assuring that a thorough examination is made of the economic impact of proposals before the Pollution Control Board, the Institute believes that a modification of PA 79-790 would greatly strengthen the economic assessment program in the future. In a number of cases, regulations have been proposed in the last year which were not considered to warrant impact statements by either the Institute or the Economic Technical Advisory Committee. In some cases, there was essentially no controversy regarding the proposal. In other cases, the major considerations regarding the desirability of adopting the proposals were clearly not economic.

The Institute would like to propose that it be given the ability to issue a "negative declaration" to the Pollution Control Board in such cases. Such a statement would indicate the rationale for not doing an economic evaluation. The concurrence of the Economic Technical Advisory Committee would be obtained before such a procedure would be followed.

The ability to issue a negative declaration would have two major benefits in administering PA 79-790: 1) It would eliminate regulatory delays for those proposals not having significant economic impacts; 2) It would free resources from unnecessary economic assessments and allow a greater concentration of effort on those environmental regulations which are suspected to impact the State economy to a large extent. The members of the Economic Technical Advisory Committee and representatives of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency were asked for their opinion on the desirability of the negative declaration concept, and in each case, they supported its adoption.

Figure 1


Proposal Initiated
by
Pollution Control Board (P.C.B.)
Illinois EPA
Institute for Environmental Quality (IIEQ)
Citizen or Private Group
PCB
publishes proposal
IIEQ commissions
technical study
Technical Hearing on
Proposal
IIEQ commissions
economic study
Economic Technical
Advisory Committee
reviews study
Economic Impact
Hearings
PCB makes
decision

Introduction

In October 1975 Illinois became the first state to pass legislation requiring that the economic impacts of proposed environmental regulations be considered. The basic purpose of these evaluations was to provide information regarding the costs and benefits of the proposals to the Pollution Control Board. Since the passage of Public Act 79-790, the Institute for Environmental Quality has completed thirteen economic impact studies of proposed regulations. An estimated 10 man-years of Institute and consulting personnel time have been expended and an administrative structure has been developed to handle the economic investigative responsibilities of the Institute.

This report, submitted to comply with the provisions of PA 79-790, describes the results of these activities for the first year, 1976. Specifically, the report has four main objectives:

1) To briefly outline how the Institute is administratively implementing the requirements of PA 79-790,

2) To provide an overview of the projected economic impacts reported in the completed economic studies of 1976,

3) To present some of the areas still requiring Institute effort, and

4) To propose a possible legislative clarification of PA 79-790, based on Institute experiences in 1976.

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The Administration of Economic Assessments

The provisions of PA 79-790 have altered the nature of the interaction between the Pollution Control Board, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Institute with regard to the regulatory hearing process. Formerly the Board or the EPA might call upon the Institute to carry out a technical study in support of a specific regulatory proposal. The subjects of these studies have normally been environmental quality assessments, evaluations of the state-of-the-art of control technology or environmental health-related topics. The findings of the study are presented in the technical hearing before the Board. These actions represented the major Institute participation in Pollution Control Board hearings.

The administration of PA 79-790 has added several steps to this procedure. Under the present conditions, the Institute will commission an economic study toward the end of the technical hearings on the proposal. The technical hearings thus become an input to the economic study. Frequently modifications are made in the proposal during the course of the technical hearings so that the scope of the economic study must be altered.

In most cases the economic studies are carried out by consultants to the Institute. The Economic Technical Advisory Committee helps in planning the economic studies and in reviewing the results of these studies. This committee, whose existence and composition are specified in PA 79-790, writes an opinion to the Institute

Director indicating whether the study should be forwarded to the Board. After receiving the study, the Board is then free to schedule hearings on the economic reasonableness of the proposed regulation.

Twenty-one studies have now been completed or are under contract. Those finished are listed in Table 1 according to their areas of environmental impact - air, water, or noise. The air pollution regulatory effort has been, for the most part, a process of minor adjustments to the existing regulatory structure, with the exception of the proposal for the control of accidental hazardous waste releases. The water pollution-related efforts have been divided between administrative amendments and the setting of environmental standards. Proposed noise regulations have dealt with the development of noise standards for specific source categories.

Table 2 shows the status of these proposals through the regulatory process. Four stages are defined:

1) the initiation of the study,
2) the completion of the study,
3) the submission of an opinion regarding the study by the Economic Technical Advisory Committee, and
4) Board decision on the proposal.

In addition to these proposals, six contracts are now being negotiated by the Institute with consultants for additional studies.

The importance of the Economic Technical Advisory Committee goes beyond the review of completed studies. It is also responsible for advising the Institute Director in the development of guidelines regarding what should be included in future studies, and how the evaluation program should be implemented. The committee members represent the diverse groups affected by the Illinois environmental protection program. The present members of the committee are listed in Table 3. Members must be confirmed by the Senate; such approval was obtained in the summer of 1976.

Two Institute efforts not specifically related to single proposals deserve mention. PA 79-790 required the benefits of proposals to be assessed. Since most consultants were not familiar with the techniques of environmental benefit estimation, the Institute has prepared, with the assistance of Governor's State University, a handbook on benefit estimation. The handbook lists over twenty of the presently used techniques.

A second area of concern with the successful implementation of the economic study program was the evaluation of secondary impacts. Any industry using products of an Illinois firm subject to a new environmental restriction may find itself paying more for these products. The Institute is working closely with the Illinois Bureau of the Budget and the University of Illinois, Center for Advanced Computation to adapt a Bureau economic policy analysis tool to aid in meeting the needs of evaluating statewide economic impacts.

Summary of Economic Impact Assessments

In order to summarize the findings of the completed studies listed in Table 1, several dimensions of economic impact must be defined:

1) The identification of benefited groups, the nature of the benefits of a proposal, and if possible the magnitude of such benefits,

2) The costs associated with the adoption of a proposal and indication of who might bear these costs,

3) A description of the secondary impacts-- price, employment, industrial migration, etc.-- of the proposals.

In Tables 4 and 5 a summary of the benefits and costs are presented. The benefits of proposals listed in Table 4 are derived from reductions in pollution control costs if the proposal seeks a delay or reduction in the stringency of an existing standard. If the proposal is to adopt a stronger standard, then benefits are measured in terms of reductions of environmentally-related damages.

Two of the five air pollution proposals affect a limited number of plants, from one to four. The rationale presented for their adoption generally has to do with specific technological control problems applicable or peculiar to a single plant. Only one proposed air-related regulation was concerned with the extension of an environmental control standard - the ban on leaf burning.

The benefits of the regulation are related to the incidence of chronic respiratory problems in areas adjacent to leaf burning activities. The Institute report concludes that if a ban is adopted, leaf burning should be allowed or prohibited based on the size of the population of a city. The net benefits of a ban are greater in larger cities.

Two of the air pollution-related proposals are concerned with the management of air pollution episodes. The toxic substance proposal mandates the development of emergency episode plans to control an atmospheric release of toxic substances. This measure derives its benefits from reductions in the number of evacuations in affected areas and health-related costs due to improved emergency response planning. The ozone episode proposal, which amends previous episode control procedures, seeks to strengthen the ability of the E.P.A. to restrict activities causing hydrocarbon emissions during periods of high ground level ozone concentrations. The benefits are health-related.

The benefits of water pollution-related proposals are derived from reductions in administrative costs (fish toxicants proposal) or the cost of compliance with water quality standards. In one case, a proposed delay in compliance with a combined sewer overflow control regulation has been proposed to coordinate Illinois control programs with the timing of federal grant disbursements. This delay reduces the cost of compliance to municipalities. The proposal to exempt certain sources from total dissolved solid

effluent standards, the proposed modification of thermal standards for the Commonwealth Edison Kincaid lant and CIPS Lake Newton, and the cyanide proposal, all represent a form of relaxation of existing standards and a reduction of compliance costs.

The benefits of the noise control proposals result from less hearing loss and nuisance and the increases in property values in the vicinity of the noise source.

The costs of the proposals are summarized in Table 5. These costs are either due to increases in pollution control investments if stricter standards are proposed, or increases in environmental damages if existing standards are relaxed.

The costs of two of the air pollution control proposals occur due to increases in localized pollution damages in the vicinity of single plants. The leaf burning ban costs are due to increased expenditures for leaf collection by municipalities. Ozone episode control costs consist of foregone income due to the forced temporary closing of commercial activity as well as the administrative costs of the Episode Control Procedure. The cost of the toxic substance regulation is almost entirely incurred due to administration.

The proposals to alter or delay water effluent standards cause increases in environmental damages in terms of a reduction in the recreational use of water and increases in required water purification costs. The cost of the noise control proposals involves a replacement of mufflers, tires and vehicle-related equipment.

The secondary impacts of the majority of the proposals were

considered to be negligible. Most of the regulations affect too local an area or do not result in sufficient costs to increase general price levels. In the case of the single plant regulations and the motor racing noise proposal, loss of employment could result locally if firms decided to move out of the state. The proposal to alter the total dissolved solid standards would have a local impact on the Village of Sauget if affected industries, required to bear the cost of stricter standards, decide to relocate. The factors affecting industrial migration are many and the share that additional environmental costs might play in the industrial locational decision is difficult to estimate. Improvement in the estimation of the effects of the environmental protection program on such decisions suggests a subject of further Institute investigation.

Two of the proposals were considered to carry some potential for significant secondary economic impact. The indirect loss of output due to the implementation of strict cyanide standards was estimated to range from $31 - $106 million, with employment losses of 1,600 to 4,000 workers. The indirect impact of not delaying combined sewer regulation compliance schedules is a loss of employment, higher municipal taxes and losses of sales and construction activities. As an indication of the magnitude of these effects, the study reported that a minimum additional average tax burden per family of $44 per year would result if no delay was allowed.

Further Implementation Efforts With Regard To PA 79-790

The first year (1976) of Institute efforts has produced significant increases in the emphasis given to economic considerations in the environmental regulatory decision-making process. A number of projects to improve the quality of the studies are scheduled for next year. One of the major problems in implementing the economic studies has been the collection of high quality data on industrial costs. Since there may be 15 to 20 evaluations per year, the Institute recognizes that the collection of cost data, if not efficiently organized, could be a burden to affected industries. Furthermore, much of the desired data may be sensitive or confidential in nature, many firms being hesitant to provide information which can be linked to their operations. The Institute intends to work with legal counsel and industrial representatives in the coming year to develop procedures for reducing the costs of data collection, insuring its confidentiality and accuracy.

The problem of estimating benefits will receive continued attention. The Institute is currently working with a task force of economists from Illinois universities in an effort to improve benefit estimation procedures.

In the first year of the implementation of PA 79-790, the format of the studies by the contractors was for the most part, not uniform. The Insitute with the aid of the Economic Technical Advisory Committee will develop guidelines in the coming year

regarding the desired format for the reporting of the economic investigations. This will facilitate the use of the studies by the Board and the determination of the composite impact of Pollution Control Board regulations on the economy of the state.

One of the major difficulties in administering the economic assessment program has been the problem of deciding when to commission the study and how much variation should be considered in the proposed regulation when an assessment of its benefits and cost is made. If a study is commissioned very early in the regulatory hearing process and considers only the currently discussed proposal, changes in its provisions as a result of testimony many render the economic study inadequate. Waiting to the conclusion of technical hearings to begin the study avoids this problem, but may introduce delays in the regulatory process. The Institute, working in cooperation with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Pollution Control Board, will seek to develop methods by which the earliest possible identification of the desired scope of the economic studies can be made in order to resolve this difficulty.

Recommendations for Legislative Clarification of PA 79-790

The provisions of PA 79-790 may be interpreted as requiring an economic impact statement for all the regulatory proposals to the Pollution Control Board after October 1975. In a number of cases, regulations were proposed during 1976 which were not considered

to warrant impact statements by either the Institute or the Economic Technical Advisory Committee. In some cases, such as the delay in the combined sewer regulations, there was essentially no controversy regarding the proposal. In other cases, such as the leaf burning proposal, the major considerations regarding the desirability of the adoption of the proposals were clearly not economic.

The Institute would like to propose that it be given the ability to issue a "negative declaration" to the Pollution Control Board in such cases. Such a statement would indicate the rationale for not doing an economic evaluation. The concurrence of the Economic Technical Advisory Committee would be obtained before such a procedure would be followed. The ability to issue a negative declaration would have two major benefits in administering PA 79-790:

1) it would eliminate regulatory delays for those proposals not having significant economic impacts;

2) it would free resources from unnecessary economic assessments and allow a greater concentration of efforts on those environmental regulations which are suspected to impact the state economy to a large extent.

The members of the Economic Technical Advisory Committee and representatives of the Illinois Environmental Progection Agency were asked for their opinion on the desirability of the negative declaration concept, and in each case they supported its adoption. The present

form of PA 79-790 may actually allow the use of negative declarations or an equivalent (i.e., a highly abbreviated economic statement indicating no significant impacts). In order to avoid ambiguity, however, the Institute would recommend that an explicit clarification of this capability be made.

A second area requiring clarification regards public notification time associated with the issuance of the study. PA 79-790 provisions now require that each study shall be made available to the public at least 30 days prior to the Institute's formal presentation of it to the Board. The Board must then make the study available for 30 days before holding hearings. Therefore, a delay of 60 days between the time the study is completed and the earliest possible date to hold hearings may be required if these periods must be sequential. The Institute would recommend the public exposure time of the study be limited to a 30 day period after the Board has formally received the study. Under this arrangement, the public will still have sufficient time and access to the investigation to prepare comments on the report.

Table 1

Proposals for Which Studies are Completed

Air	
NO_x control of cyclone fired furnace	Proposed NO_x standard for single, partially refuse-coal-fired plant in Marion, Ill.
CO limitations on partial oxidation process plants	Proposed CO standard applying to four plants using partial oxidation process
Leaf burning ban	Proposal to ban open burning of leaves
Registration of toxic substances	Requirement to register control plans for accidental toxic substance releases from stationary sources
Ozone episode control	Proposal to strengthen EPA authority to restrict commercial and industrial activity during ozone episodes
Water	
Fish toxicant permits	Elimination of requirement to obtain a Board variance to use fish toxicants
Thermal discharge standards	Alteration of thermal standard for Commonwealth Edison Kincaid Plant
Combined sewer overflow regulations	Proposal to delay compliance dates for combined sewer overflow regulations
Total dissolved solid standard exemptions	Proposal that sources along Mississippi River be exempt from present dissolved solids standard
Cyanide standards	Proposed modification of cyanide discharge standard
Thermal discharge standard for Newton Lake	Alteration of thermal standard for Central Illinois Public Service Company power plant
Noise	
Motor racing noise control	Maximum allowable sound level standard for motor racing activity
Vehicle noise standard	Proposal to limit noise levels from automobiles and trucks

Table 2

Administrative Status

	Study initiation	Study completion	ETAC Opinion	PCB decision
NO_x control	x	x	x	
CO limitations	x	x	x	
Leaf burning ban	x	x	x	
Toxic substance registration	x	x	x	
Ozone episode control	x	x	x	x
Fish toxicant permits	x	x	x	
Thermal discharge standard - CIPS	x	x	x	
Combined sewer overflow	x	x	x	x
Total dissolved solids standard	x	x	x	x
Cyanide standard	x	x	x	
Motor racing noise	x	x	x	
Vehicle noise standard	x	x	x	x
Thermal discharge standard - Edison	x	x	x	

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Table 3

Economic Technical Advisory Committee

	Representing
Frank Beal Director, Institute for Environmental Quality	IIEQ
W. W. Dodge Caterpillar Tractor	Industry
Dr. Russell T. Odell University of Illinois (Emeritus)	Agriculture
Fred Smith IBEW Local 117	Labor
Charles F. Willson Vice President Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Co. of Chicago	Commerce
Dr. Arthur Wolff, Chairman Environmental Health Program University of Illinois Medical Center	Public Health
George Bersted Mayor of Monmouth, Illinois	Local Government
Dr. Herman Sievering Associate Professor Environmental Management Program Governors State University	Member at large

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Table 4

Benefits of Proposed Regulations

Regulation	Type of Benefits	Who is Benefited	Dollar Value
1. NO_x control of cyclone furnaces	Reduction in control cost	Southern Illinois Power Company	$500,000 up
2. CO limitations on partial oxidation processes	Reduction in control costs	4 manufacturers of polybasic acids	$3 to $7 million
3. Leaf burning ban	Reduction in health impacts	Those in the vicinity of leaf burning activities	Not estimated
4. Toxic substance episode planning	Reduction in forced evacuations and health related costs	General public	$800,000 to $1,600,000
5. Ozone episode planning	Reduction in adverse health impacts	General public	Not estimated
6. Fish toxicant permits	Reduction in administration costs	EPA	$120,000 per year
7. Thermal discharge standard for Lake Sangchris	Reduction in control costs	Commonwealth Edison	$10 to $28 million
8. Sewer overflow compliance delay	Increase in Federal support; reduction in municipal tax requirements	Municipalities	$350 million
9. Changes in cyanide standard	Reduction in control costs	Municipalities and some industries	$13-$66 million
10. Changes in total dissolved solid standard	Reduction in control costs	Industries in Sauget, Illinois	$2 to $4 million
11. Motor racing noise regulation	Enhancement of neighborhood amenities; possible health effects	Residents in vicinity of racetracks	$400,000 to $700,000
12. Motor vehicle noise standard	Increase in property value and neighborhood amenities	Residents in areas adjacent to major roadways	$63 million
13. Thermal discharge standard for Lake Newton	Reduction in control costs	Central Illinois Public Service Company	$16 - $37 million per year

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Table 5

Costs of Proposed Regulations

Regulation	Type of cost	Who bears cost	Annual Dollar Value
1. NO_x control for cyclone furnace	Damage related to increase in NO_x emissions	Residents in vicinity of power plant	Not estimated
2. CO limitations on partial oxidation process	Damage related to increase in CO emissions	Residents in vicinity of four affected plants	not estimated
3. Leaf burning ban	Increase in cost of leaf collection	Municipalities	not estimated
4. Toxic substance episode planning	Administrative costs of permit processing	EPA and users of toxic substances	$1.2 million
5. Ozone episode planning	Cost of forced closings during episode	Commercial and industrial concerns	$9.3-$14.8 million
6. Fish toxicant permits	No cost indicated	-	-
7. Thermal discharge standard for Lake Sangchris	Possible harm to aquatic life	Certain equatic species of flora and fauna	not estimated
8. Sewer overflow compliance delay	Delay in reduction of flood damage and higher recreational uses of water	General public	$10 million
9. Change in cyanide standard	Reduction in recreational use of water	General public	$100,000 to $700,000
10. Change in total dissolved solid standard	Increase in cost of providing residential and industrial water supply	Users downstream of Sauget, Ill.	$3 million
11. Motor racing noise control	Increase in auxiliary equipment for racing vehicles	Motor racing industry	$800,000
12. Motor vehicle noise regulation	Increase in automotive and truck equipment costs	Trucking industry and general public	$4 million
13. Thermal discharge standard for Lake Newton	Possible harm to aquatic life	Certain equatic species of flora and fauna	not estimated